

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 JIDDA 05495 01 OF 02 220716Z

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ACTION NEA-16

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R 220545Z SEP 74

FM AMEMBASSY JIDDA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8704

INFO AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 JIDDA 5495

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: EFIN, SA, US, SU

SUBJECT: SAUDI APPEAL FOR MORE AMERICAN AID OF THE SUDAN

1. SUMMARY: MINISTER OF STATE SAQQAF TOLD AMBASSADOR AKINS HE WAS PLEASED TO LEARN U.S. AMBASSADOR WOULD RETURN TO KHARTOUM IN OCTOBER. HE HOPED THIS WOULD BE ACCOMPANIED BY AN INCREASE IN U.S. ASSISTANCE BECAUSE OF SUDAN'S IMPORTANCE, AND THE COMMUNIST THREAT PRESIDENT NIMIERY FACES FROM WITHIN. WE BELIEVE RETURN OF U.S. AMBASSADOR TO KHARTOUM WHILE KHARTOUM MURDERERS ARE UNPUNISHED IS A MISTAKE. WE WILL APPEAR PETULANT AND WEAK. OUR ACTION WILL DIMINISH DIGNITY OF THE U.S. AND INCREASE HAZARD TO U.S. OFFICIALS EVERYWHERE. END SUMMARY.

2. SAYYID OMAR SAQQAF, SAUDI MINISTER OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS, TOLD ME SEPT 16 THAT HE WAS PLEASED TO LEARN IN WASHINGTON THAT THE UNITED STATES WOULD SEND ITS AMBASSADOR BACK TO KHARTOUM IN OCTOBER. HE SAID HE KNEW HOW I MUST FEEL ABOUT THE SUDAN; I HAD PROTESTED VIGOROUSLY WHEN THE MURDERERS OF CLEO NOEL AND CURT MOORE WERE RELEASED. BUT HE ADDED, "YOU MUST NOT ALLOW PERSONAL FEELINGS TO INTERFERE WITH YOUR PROFESSIONAL JUDGMENT"; IT IS EXTREMELY IMPORTANT FOR THE UNITED STATES TO RESTORE ITS POSITION IN THE SUDAN.

3. SAQQAF SAID THAT THE COMMUNISTS WERE TRYING TO UNSEAT
CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 02 JIDDA 05495 01 OF 02 220716Z

NIMIERY; THAT NIMIERY HAD RECENTLY DECIDED THAT SUDANESE

WILL NOT BE ALLOWED TO ACCEPT SCHOLARSHIPS FOR STUDY IN COMMUNIST COUNTRIES AS "THEY ALL RETURN AS AGITATORS AND SUBVERSIVES."

4. HE SAID THE SUDAN IS AN IMPORTANT COUNTRY NOW AND WILL BE MUCH MORE IMPORTANT. SAUDI ARABIA HAS DECIDED THAT IT MUST GIVE NIMIERY SUBSTANTIAL ASSISTANCE AND IT HOPED THE UNITED STATES WOULD RESTORE ITS OWN AID. HE PARTICULARLY WOULD LIKE TO SEE JOINT U.S.-SAUDI PROJECTS IN THE SUDAN.

5. I TOLD HIM I AGREED WITH HIS STATEMENT ON THE NECESSITY OF OBSERVING EVERY EVENT IN A COLD OBJECTIVE FASHION, ALTHOUGH THIS WAS TOTALLY UNCHARACTERISTIC OF ARABS. AND I WOULD OF COURSE REPORT HIS REQUEST TO WASHINGTON.

6. COMMENT: I WILL NOT NEED TO BE REMINDED THAT IT IS INDECOROUS TO COMMENT ON EVENTS IN COUNTRIES OUTSIDE MY IMMEDIATE AREA OF RESPONSIBILITY. I KNOW THIS. I ALSO AM PREPARED TO ACCEPT THE POSSIBILITY, INDEED THE PROBABILITY THAT WE HAVE INTERESTS IN THE SUDAN WHICH TRANSCEND OUR CONCERN OVER THE LOSS OF TWO MEN. AND I ADMIT RIGHT NOW THAT MY FEELINGS TOWARD THE KHARTOUM GOVERNMENT ARE SUBJECTIVE. CLEO AND CURT WERE COLLEAGUES AND FRIENDS. I WAS APPALLED BY THEIR DEATHS AND BY THE LENIENCY TOWARD THEIR MURDERERS. I BELIEVE WE MADE A MISTAKE IN SENDING AN AMBASSADOR TO KHARTOUM ONLY ON THE BASIS, AS I WAS TOLD, THAT NIMIERY HAD PROMISED THAT JUSTICE WOULD BE DONE, THAT OUR NOT SENDING AN AMBASSADOR WOULD IMPLY LACK OF CONFIDENCE IN HIS WORD. NIMIERY BROKE HIS WORD. IF OUR ONLY REACTION NOW IS TO RECALL OUR AMBASSADOR ON A LONG HOME LEAVE, THE CONSEQUENCES WILL EXTEND BEYOND MY PERSONAL FEELINGS OR OUR BILATERAL RELATIONS.

7. LIKE MOST FOREIGN SERVICE OFFICERS I STRONGLY APPROVE OF OUR POLICY OF NOT RPT NOT NEGOTIATING WITH TERRORISTS WHO KIDNAP AMERICAN OFFICIALS. I ARDENTLY WISH ALL GOVERNMENTS WOULD FOLLOW OUR LEAD. THE FRENCH AND DUTCH ARE AT THIS MOMENT PAYING FOR THEIR PAST LACK OF RESOLUTENESS. BUT ARE WE NOW SEEING (ASSUMING SAQQAF'S REPORT IS CORRECT) CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 JIDDA 05495 01 OF 02 220716Z

A SUBSTANTIAL CHANGE IN THIS POLICY? IF SO, I AND ALL MY COLLEAGUES WILL BE LESS SECURE. THE SAUDIS HAVE TOLD ME REPEATEDLY THAT THEY WOULD NOT BEHAVE AS HAVE OTHER ARAB COUNTRIES; IF I OR ANY OF MY STAFF WERE KILLED THEY WOULD PUBLICLY EXECUTE THE MURDERERS IMMEDIATELY. PERHAPS SO. I THINK THEY WOULD. AND PERHAPS I AM, BY THIS, LESS ENDANGERED THAN ANY OF MY COLLEAGUES.

8. WE SHOULD NOT MAINTAIN FLATLY THAT ANY GOVERNMENT WHICH EXECUTES A TERRORIST WOULD NOT IN ANY WAY BE ENDANGERED; I THINK IT WOULD BE RELATIVELY SAFE; AND I THINK THE TERRORISTS WOULD HESITATE TAKING RETALIATORY ACTION IF THEY TOO KNEW THEY WOULD BE SHOT. BUT OF COURSE WE CAN NOT DEMONSTRATE CONCLUSIVELY A FUTURE ACTION.

9. WE DO KNOW HOWEVER THAT GOVERNMENTS WHICH ARREST TERRORISTS AND THEN YIELD TO FURTHER TERRORIST PRESSURE ENTER AN EVER-DESCENDING SPIRAL OF ACTION AND REACTION FROM WHICH THEY CANNOT ESCAPE. SOME COUNTER-WEIGHT MUST BE APPLIED BY THE UNITED STATES, PARTICULARLY WHEN ITS OWN NATIONALS ARE INVOLVED; GOVERNMENTS APPARENTLY MUST BE GIVEN SOME ADDITIONAL REASON FOR NOT YIELDING TO PRESSURE FROM TERRORISTS. BUT WE DO NOT SEEM TO BE SUPPLYING THIS REASON - AT LEAST NOT IN THE SUDAN. OUR ACTIONS WILL BE REMEMBERED WHEN SOME NEW GOVERNMENT HOLDS THE MURDERERS OF AMERICAN CITIZENS (WHERE ARE THE PERPETRATORS OF THE ROME AND ATHENS KILLINGS?). IT WILL KNOW THAT THE TERRORISTS CAN MAKE TROUBLE; IF IT ALSO KNOWS THAT THE AMERICAN REACTION WILL ONLY BE AN IMPOTENT CRY OF GRIEF AND RAGE, WHICH WILL BE QUICKLY FORGOTTEN IN CONSIDERATIONS OF OUR "WIDER INTERESTS," WE MUST EXPECT ANOTHER SIMILAR ACTION. THROUGHOUT THE WORLD, MOREOVER, MANY WILL REGARD THIS AS U.S. HELPLESSNESS FOLLOWED BY OPPORTUNISM; WE WILL SEEM PETULANT AND WEAK TO HAVE PULLED OUR AMBASSADOR OUT WHEN THE KILLERS WERE RELEASED, AND THEN TO HAVE SENT HIM BACK "WHEN SCHOOL BEGAN IN THE FALL."

CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 01 JIDDA 05495 02 OF 02 220744Z

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ACTION NEA-16

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8705

INFO AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

C O N F I D E N T I A L FINAL SECTION OF 2 JIDDA 5495

10. THERE ARE GROUPS WITHIN THE PALESTINE LIBERATION ORGANIZATION WHICH ASPIRE TO DISRUPT THE PEACE TALKS, AND WHICH DEARLY WISH TO REMOVE OUR MEDIATING PRESENCE. THEY WILL CERTAINLY SERIOUSLY CONSIDER KIDNAPPING AN AMERICAN AMBASSADOR AND NIMERY HAS SHOWN THAT KILLING HIM, IF THE USG DOES NOT YIELD TO THEIR DEMANDS, CAN BE EASY AND SAFE. THE GOVERNMENT INVOLVED, WE MUST ASSUME, WILL RECEIVE OUR DEMANDS FOR JUSTICE WITH THE SAME PROTESTATIONS OF INNOCENCE AND INDIGNATION AS WE HEARD IN KHARTOUM. AND WITH THE SAME ULTIMATE RESULTS.

11. TO SAY, IN CONCLUSION, THAT I AM NOT RPT NOT ENDORSING SAYYID OMAR'S REQUEST WOULD BE REDUNDANT. I HAVE NOT DISCUSSED THIS WITH THE SAUDIS SINCE MY INITIAL REACTION (REFTEL) AND IF WE DO RESTORE NORMAL RELATIONS WITH KHARTOUM I CERTAINLY WILL NOT. FOR MY OWN PEACE OF MIND, AS WELL AS FOR THE EXPLANATIONS I WILL NEED TO GIVE THE SAUDIS, WHO WILL REMEMBER MY PROTESTS IN JUNE, I WOULD APPRECIATE RECEIVING OUR RATIONALE FOR OUR ACTION. I WILL NEED THIS PARTICULARLY IF WE DECIDE TO COOPERATE WITH THE SAUDIS IN ANY PROGRAM OF JOINT AID TO THE SUDAN.
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